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**ПАБЛИСИТИ СМИ ПРИ СОЦИАЛИЗМЕ:
ОБНОВЛЕНИЕ РЕДАКЦИОННОЙ ПОЛИТИКИ
СПУТНИКОВОГО ТЕЛЕВИДЕНИЯ
В МУНИЦИПАЛИТЕТЕ ЧОНКИНЯ**

Каким образом китайские СМИ создают представления о себе в глазах общественности. Особый интерес на общем фоне представляет деятельность спутникового телевизионного канала г. Чонкinya. В настоящее время канал проходит процесс огосударствления, что во многом определяет его содержательную политику. Автор статьи в связи с этим обращает внимание на трансформацию общественной сферы, которая реализуется, по его мнению, не только в «свободном обществе», описанном Ю. Хабермасом, но и в условиях реализации социалистических (марксистских) идей.

Ключевые слова: социалистические СМИ, медиа-публицити, публицити в условиях развития социализма

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**Socialist publicness of the media:
the reflection on the re-edition of China's
chongqing municipal satellite TV in 2011**

The study explores socialist media's publicness/publicity based on the case studies of the re-edition of Chongqing Municipal Satellite TV. This media re-edition is oriented toward de-commercialization and is promoted by the government. There are two approaches to analyze the re-edition: one is Habermas' notion of public sphere and the other is Marxism or socialism.

Keywords: socialist media; media publicity; socialist publicness.

In the early 1980s the Chinese media originated the market-oriented reform with commercial advertisements appearing on TV. Yet after more than 30 years, some of the Chinese media seemed to step on the self-opposite way: returning to pre-reforming orientation of non-commercialization.

In March 2011, Chongqing Municipal Satellite TV implemented the «Mainstream Media, Public Channel» policy, which forbids commercials, cuts TV plays and «infotainments», and has already increased an amount of news, cultural, educational programs and public advertisements. The policy was originated by the Department of Publicity/Propaganda, CPC and has been almost entirely financed by the government (0.15 billion per year). Therefore, Chongqing Municipal Satellite TV became the first public («red») TV channel in China's mainland.

Chongqing Satellite TV has been broadcasting a series of programs titled «China Red» (Culture) («Red» means «Revolutionary»), what's more, extensively mobilizing the people to participate in the production of the programs according to the principles of both «universality» and «preferentialism».

Since Chongqing Municipal Satellite TV began to re-edit itself, in China there has been rising a new wave to study and rethink the nature of media and media system reform.

Now we propose one core question: Is transformed Chongqing Municipal Satellite TV Becoming Public?

Put it fully, after the re-edition of content, has Chongqing Municipal Satellite TV turned out to be a public TV station or a public broadcasting service (just like BBC, NHK, or PBS)?

Put in the context, is it progressive (or retrogressive) in the process of China's media system reform?

There are two opposite answers: «Yes» and «No». The point here is how to make sense of media publicness?

What's Publicness of Media?

Based on the recent literature review, we can conclude that there exist quite a few (at least four) perspectives from which to view the media publicness. Thus we have (at least) four readings of media publicness in theory: (1) publicness of subject; (2) publicness of channel; (3) publicness of content; and (4) publicness of audience.

1. Media Publicness in Terms of Subject

This is the most classical, influential, also strict and activist definition of media publicness, which is derived from Habermas' notion of «public sphere» (*Öffentlichkeit*). By public sphere, Habermas means an arguing (debating) arena opening to all free from both government/power (political) and market/capital (commercial). Although it is defined with regard to the social context of interpersonal communication and confined within the class of bourgeois, it does have the universal value as an «ideal type» of publicness: being both non-commercial and non-official.

According to publicness, media publicness entails that the media is public in that it is owned by all the participants, i. e. by the society (common, human community), but not by the state, the corporation or any individuals, and in which the public are communication subjects (participants), not just objects (audience). It is only the society-owned media that can offer an equal and free debating field impartially for all interest groups to express their own opinions, appeals and needs.

The media theory of democratic-participation is pregnant in the property-right-oriented concept of media publicness (common-property- right media) and the notion of civil society [1]. The communication ideal of democratic participation (or participatory democracy) leads the people and especially the disadvantaged to establish their own small, grass-root media in the 1970s, which is called the social or civic movement of «alternative media» (sometimes supported by the government, e.g. in Venezuela) [2].

2. Media Publicness in Terms of Channel

This is also a well-established concept of media publicness, appearing in the 1920s (e.g. in 1927, BBC). Owing to the failure of market, public good (or goods) should be offered by the government. The media (infrastructure) is such public (non-commercial) goods, service or welfare, which would be financed by the state, in which the public as communication objects (audience) are beneficiaries.

This welfarist concept of public media takes many countries, including socialist ones, into constructing public broadcasting service system today.

3. Media Publicness in Terms of Content

This is another classic concept of media publicness, also derived from Habermas' theory of public sphere. In terms of content, media publicness involves that public

media carry public universal values that aren't partial to any parties (political or commercial) and that they are committed to objectively, all-roundly informing or demonstrating what is happening in the human history for the public (audience) and to indifferently inspiring or entertaining them.

Public (just, fair) communication concept of media requires public media to self-examine the value preference of its communication contents to revise (correct) its biased programs.

4. Media Publicness in Terms of Audience

This is a recent concept of media publicness appearing in the 1990s. According to the media publicness with regard to audience, public media shouldn't render audience neither to be consumers (commodities) nor commons, but devote itself to cultivating them as citizens. Such a concept of media publicness is also in line with Habermas' theory of public sphere.

As citizens, the audience of public media are not the recipients who receive communication service provided by the governments or merchants without any reservation, and then express their satisfaction by polls, audience ratings, and buying activities.

The audience concept of media's publicness requires public media to indifferently open to all to ensure that everyone has free access to all necessary information for the exercise of citizens' rights and responsibilities.

What's Socialist Publicness of Media: Evaluating the transformation of Chongqing Satellite TV

Chongqing Satellite TV seemed to set up an example (or paradigm) of re-editing programs and more and more Chinese media (especially TV stations) have been following it.

There seems to be a consensus in today's China: after more than 30 years' media system reform, under the so-called framework of «One System (state-ownership), Two Regimes (administrative and commercial)», China's media have gone so far in the direction of commercialization that they transgress the moral «bottom-line» and undermine public interests.

It can be said that the reform of Chongqing Satellite TV is the result of reviewing, rethinking critically neo-liberalism and its practice in China. We can clearly see a «spiral-up» track from non-commercial to commercialization, and then to de-commercialization, that is, from political to de-politicization, and then to re-politicization. The process is just in the Marxist law of development of human society, i.e. «double denial». As Prof. Zhao Yuezhi (at Simon Fraser University of Canada, a scholar of communication Critical School) wrote, «We have all reasons to believe that the substitution of the common, non-commercial-oriented socialist media system with citizens' for the capitalist media system, which is subsidized by commercial-ads and whose main purpose is private capital's seeking profit, is up to the «developmental law»» [3, p. 3].

Following the anti-neo-liberalist or socialist approach, she concludes, «If the spiritual emancipation at the beginning of the reform and opening –up more than 30

years ago broke through the socialist political ideology of media non-commercialization, nowadays we should break through (market) liberalist ideology ... to imagine free, democratic, and shared socialist communication and culture» [3, p. 13].

Thus, according to the Marxist view of journalism, the reform of Chongqing Satellite TV is an effort to re-build the media's socialist publicness, for its re-edition has been in the charge of the communist party and been conducted under the leadership of the party. The media has been attaching the most importance to both the leadership of the party and the initiative and participation of the people. As for the TV station with socialist characteristics featured by the leadership of the party, publicness means social-ness, and media's publicness means media's social-ness. It could be called Socialist Publicness. Socialist publicness is justified by its unity of the party and the people: the party fully represent (the interest of) the people and it's the full agent of the people.

But if we are the fundamentalists of media's publicness, or if we strictly stick to Habermas' view of public sphere, we would question the term «socialist publicness of media» for media's socialist publicness is not the typical pattern (type) of media's publicness for lack of the core of media's publicness, i.e. independence of political interference. Instead it rests on political interference. Therefore socialist publicness of media is a pseudo- or quasi- publicness of media in terms of Habermas' notion of publicness.

Actually in practice, the de-commercialized Chongqing Municipal Satellite TV hasn't fully fulfilled and represented all the four dimensions of media's publicness as expected until now.

Why? The basic reason must be that it hasn't changed its role as the communist party and its government's «organ»/»mouthpiece» and it still heavily depends on and attaches itself to the state/government /party. Thus it's hard to say that the reformed Chongqing Satellite TV is a public media or another BBC (CBC/NHK/PBS) which is independent both of market/ capital/commercial press and of government/power / political influence.

Maybe socialist publicness of media is not the true media publicness, but to be sure, socialist media's self-transformation is an effort to re-construct desirable human communication system (the great initiative and extensive participation of the people) according to another set of logic in a socialist society. It opens up imaginary space for the existence of alternative human communication in reforming China. Definitely, it's a great progress.

NOTES

1. Denis McQuail. Mass Communication Theory : An Introduction. London : Sage, 1983.
2. Paula Chakravartty and Yuezhi Zhao [eds.] Global Communications: Toward a Trans-cultural Political Economy. Lanham : Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2008.
3. Yuezhi Zhao. Constructing socialist media's publicness and cultural autonomy // Journal of News University of China. 2011. Issue 3.